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EQUITY AND TECHNOLOGY: TEACHERS' VOICES

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Teachers use technology in mathematics to enhance the classroom ambience, assist tinkering, facilitate routine processes, and to accentuate features of mathematics (Ruthven & Hennessy, 2002). However there is some evidence to suggest that the use of technology may be accentuate cultural inequalities (Vale, Forgasz & Horne, 2004). Furthermore, innovations in the use of ICT in schooling, including those involving mathematics, have not targeted students from socially or culturally disadvantaged backgrounds (Kozma, 2003).

Teachers' understanding of diversity and equity is varied and related to their school setting (Quiroz & Secada, 2003). According to the literature, equity involves equal access, equal treatment, fairness and a commitment to achieving equal outcomes and the characteristics of equitable classrooms include: connectedness, collaboration, support, intellectual quality, and respect for difference. However achieving it is a complex task for teachers working in socially disadvantaged schools. In this presentation I will report on a current study that is exploring teachers' understanding of diversity and equity and how this relates to their practice regarding the use of technology in their junior secondary mathematics classes.

Teachers from socially disadvantaged secondary schools in Melbourne were participants in this study. Twelve teachers who use technology regularly in junior secondary mathematics and who gave priority to success for all students in their classrooms were selected. In this first phase of the study, the teachers have been interviewed about the meaning of equity and how they used technology in mathematics. Preliminary analysis of these data will be presented.

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